# ETHNICITY AND AGING

## REPORT

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A NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON

ETHNICITY AND AGING

21-24 FEBRUARY 1988

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

**SPONSORED BY**

Minister of State (Seniors) Canada • Health and Welfare Canada

Canadian Public Health Association • The Department of the Secretary of State

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# REPORT OF THE NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ETHNICITY AND AGING

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Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.

The Executive Summary is also available in the following languages: German, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Punjabi, Hungarian, Chinese, Greek, Ukrainian and Polish from the Multiculturalism Division, Department of the Secretary of State, Ottawa, ON K1A 0M5.

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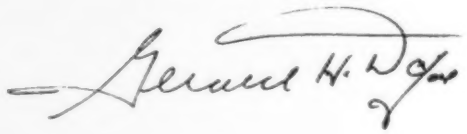
# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On behalf of the Canadian Public Health Association, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to those individuals representing the other sponsors of this important National Workshop on Ethnicity and Aging, whose interest and commitment ensured its success. The combination of representation from the Minister of State (Seniors) Canada, Health and Welfare Canada, The Department of the Secretary of State, the National Advisory Council on Aging, and the Canadian Association on Gerontology and this Association brought together individuals with unique skills and expertise to organize and develop the Workshop. However, this combined commitment and effort by the Committee members was only one half of the successful equation. The other, and perhaps most important half, was the participants themselves.

These 100 participants, of whom more than half were seniors, contributed unselfishly of their expertise and experience to the Workshop sessions and as sponsors, we thank them for their support and assistance. Together we can now respond to this Report which examines the issues discussed at the Workshop and work towards implementing the recommendations and strategies contained in this Report. We thank these individuals for their valuable contribution.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Jeanette Bartlett from Health and Welfare Canada, Seniors Secretariat and Barbara Preston from Community and Cultural Programs, Secretary of State, Multiculturalism Division, who worked closely with Karen Hall from the CPHA Workshop Secretariat. We are grateful to the Workshop Facilitation Coordinator, Gail Siler-Wells, and the facilitators who ensured that the sessions ran smoothly and effectively and to the recorders who carefully and accurately noted the views and comments produced in each Workshop session. We are indebted to Betty Bergin who applied her skills in synthesizing this information and presenting it in this Report in a clear and practical way.



Gerald H. Dafoe
Executive Director
Canadian Public Health Association

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is a report on the findings of the National Workshop on Ethnicity and Aging. It was held in Ottawa on February 21-24, 1988 for the purpose of exploring issues and concerns about aging which are unique to members of minority ethnocultural and racial groups. The workshop had three specific objectives. They were to:

1. Provide a forum for seniors from minority cultures to share their concerns with professionals and government officials, as well as each other.

2. Provide a means whereby professionals and government officials could increase their awareness and understanding of the needs and concerns of seniors from minority cultures.

3. Identify mechanisms by which issues of concern to seniors from minority cultures could be addressed.

Approximately 115 people attended the workshop. Of that number, more than half were seniors. Participants included nominees of national ethnocultural organizations, seniors' groups, national professional associations, and service organizations for ethnic seniors*. Prominent researchers in the field of ethnicity and aging and representatives from various government departments and agencies also participated.

The National Workshop on Ethnicity and Aging was a collaborative project. It was sponsored by the Minister of State (Seniors) Canada; Health and Welfare Canada; the National Advisory Council on Aging; the Department of the Secretary of State; the Canadian Public Health Association; and the Canadian Association on Gerontology. Advice was obtained from the Canadian Council on Multicultural Health and the workshop was funded by the Health Promotion Contribution Program of Health and Welfare Canada.

**A Vision For The Future**

National Workshop participants look forward to a future in which all Canadians are respectful of seniors and supportive of cultural diversity. Seniors of all ethnocultural origins will have the opportunity to contribute fully to society, and their contributions will be welcomed. They will participate in making the decisions that affect their lives and they will enjoy greater independence than they have at present. In the future, seniors will have access to a comprehensive range of well publicized services, including those that help them to maintain their independence as long as possible. Mainstream services appropriate to the language and cultural preferences of seniors will be provided by

*The term **ethnic seniors** is used to describe people in their senior years who identify with an ethnocultural group other than British or French. Though admittedly not an ideal term, it was used by many workshop participants, and the authors were unable to find an acceptable substitute.

professionals trained to respond sensitively to their needs. To ensure the independence of immigrant seniors from non-English, non-French speaking countries, they will be provided with second-language courses and an orientation to Canadian life immediately upon their arrival in Canada.

### Aging Well

**Aging well** has the same meaning worldwide. In the view of National Workshop participants, its essential elements include sound physical and mental health, financial security, comfortable housing, and a supportive social environment, as well as a feeling of contributing to society and of having control over one's life. Support networks put in place by a caring society also contribute to the quality of life people enjoy as they age.

Although careful to point out that ethnic seniors are a heterogeneous group, not a homogeneous group, National Workshop participants did comment on factors which can affect how well an ethnic senior ages. They include: the size and other characteristics of the ethnic group to which he or she belongs; Canadian societal values, in particular openness to diverse cultural traditions and values and the North American attitude to aging; and the availability of information and the accessibility of culturally appropriate services.

### Issues and Recommendations

National Workshop participants made a variety of recommendations to address the issues and challenges raised in their work groups. For the purpose of this report, the authors reviewed participants' recommendations and consolidated them under nine headings reflective of the issues raised.

Readers are asked to note that the recommendations which follow did not go to a plenary session of participants for discussion, priority setting or voting. Thus they do not have the status of formal recommendations from the National Workshop on Ethnicity and Aging. However, given the degree of unanimity among participants, they can be considered as informal recommendations from the National Workshop.

#### PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE

To create a society in Canada in which there is greater public understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity and of the special needs of ethnic seniors, National Workshop participants recommended that:

1. **Efforts be increased to educate and sensitize the public about the meaning of cultural diversity in a multicultural society, about issues faced by seniors in general, and about the unique issues faced by ethnic seniors.**

#### WORKING TOGETHER

To increase the involvement of ethnic seniors in developing policies and making decisions that affect all of Canadian society, National Workshop participants recommended that:

2. **There be increased representation of ethnic seniors on national, provincial, and community planning, policy and program advisory boards.**

To increase the involvement of ethnic seniors at the service-providing level of institutions, National Workshop participants recommended that:

3. **Institutions and organizations increase their efforts to recruit ethnic seniors as volunteer service providers.**

So that networks of people working to meet the needs of ethnic seniors and coalitions of ethnic seniors' groups can develop, National Workshop participants recommended that:

4. **A strategy be developed to ensure on-going interaction among people and institutions involved in work pertaining to the quality of life of ethnic seniors.**

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

To ensure that ethnic seniors and ethnic seniors' groups have access to information about resources, programs and services available to them, National Workshop participants recommended that:

5. **Each provincial government designate a centralized agency to collect and disseminate, in official and heritage languages, information about resources, programs and services for seniors.**

To supplement the existing knowledge base on ethnicity and aging, to gather information on resources and programs for ethnic seniors, and to disseminate the information gathered, National Workshop participants recommended that:

6. **The federal government establish a national resource centre on ethnicity and aging.**

To ensure that ethnic seniors are adequately informed about important aspects of health care (e.g., nutrition, medication), National Workshop participants recommended that:

7. **Health care institutions provide clearly understandable health promotion information in appropriate heritage languages as well as English and French.**

8. **The federal government ensure that health promotion and other programs that would benefit ethnic seniors be broadcast by the electronic media.**

## ACCESS TO SERVICES

To ensure that ethnic seniors have full access to mainstream services, National Workshop participants recommended that:

9. **Mainstream institutions and organizations review their services to determine the extent to which they meet the linguistic and culturally determined needs of ethnic seniors.**

To ensure that professionals are sensitive to the psychological, social and cultural needs of ethnic seniors, as well as their physical needs, participants in the National Workshop recommended that:

10. **Institutions increase their efforts to recruit culturally sensitive professional staff and ensure their recruitment programs target ethnocultural communities being served.**

11. **Professional schools and mainstream institutions incorporate courses in both cultural awareness and gerontology into their core curricula and on-going in-service training.**

To meet the special needs of ethnic seniors, National Workshop participants recommended that:

12. **Governments encourage the development and maintenance of culturally appropriate services and programs for ethnic seniors.**

**SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS**

Since seniors who immigrate to Canada as sponsored dependents under the family reunification program may have unique adaptation problems and may encounter problems resulting from the up-to-ten year sponsorship requirement, National Workshop participants recommended that:

13. **The federal government review its policies related to: the provision of settlement and adaptation programs for sponsored senior immigrants; the provision of second language classes for them; and seniors' eligibility for social security benefits.**

14. **The Settlement Language Training Program (SLTP) be made more flexible in terms of the length of time for which it is provided; and that SLTP classes be made more specific to the particular needs of students.**

To ensure the best possible state of mental health for ethnic seniors, National Workshop participants recommended that:

15. **The work of the Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees be commended and that those responsible be urged to give particular attention to the situation of seniors.**

16. **The concerns and needs of ethnic seniors be made a priority in mental health studies for which government funding is provided.**

**17. Funding for culturally appropriate services in the area of mental health for seniors be declared a priority.**

To ensure that ethnic seniors who are no longer autonomous receive culturally appropriate care, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**18. Non-profit nursing homes for ethnic seniors and homes for the frail elderly be established, and mortgage subsidies be offered to their developers.**

## NATIONAL POLICY ON AGING

National Workshop participants recommended that:

**19. A national policy on aging be developed which: includes a clear definition of responsible jurisdictions; outlines a plan for federal programs and services; reflects the multicultural/multiracial reality of Canada; and has sufficient resources for implementation.**

## INDEPENDENCE ISSUES COMMON TO ALL SENIORS

To allow seniors to live independently in their own homes as long as possible, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**20. In-home support and neighbourhood-based services be expanded; and that local councils on aging coordinate services to seniors.**

**21. A variety of safety and security programs be established by municipalities for seniors' homes and neighbourhoods; and that national voluntary and governmental organizations work together to collect and distribute information about innovative and successful safety and security programs.**

**22. Home maintenance subsidies be provided.**

**23. In areas where it does not exist, a property tax credit be established for qualifying seniors; and that where it does exist, the ceiling on this credit be raised.**

To ensure the financial security of seniors, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**24. The federal government lower the age at which people become eligible for old age security benefits.**

**25. Governments ensure complete indexation of both public and private pensions and of income supplement payments.**

**26. The federal government increase survivor benefits to widows.**

**27. A variety of job options such as flexible retirement, job-sharing and part-time employment be made available to seniors.**

## NATIONAL WORKSHOP FOLLOW-UP

To ensure that the ideas and enthusiasm generated at the National Workshop are not lost, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**28. Individual participants give a report on the workshop to the organization(s) which they represented or with which they are affiliated.**

**29. An ad hoc committee of participants be formed to develop mechanisms to ensure follow-up on the recommendations made by the work groups.**

**30. The sponsor organizations develop and implement a plan to follow up systematically on the workshop.**

## OTHER

To ensure the financial security of ethnic seniors, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**31. Tax deductions, up to a set maximum, be reinstated for financial assistance to dependent parents (or equivalent) living outside Canada.**

**32. Seniors who wish to return to their country of origin continue to receive old age security and benefits.**

To ensure that community groups are adequately funded to continue the programs they start, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**33. Government funding for programs delivered by community groups have clearly specified time frames; and when funding is initially approved for a program, funders take into account the difficulty of obtaining on-going core funding from other sources.**

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The issues of ethnicity and aging are increasingly central to our society. Just as the number of seniors is growing as a percentage of the total population of Canada, the percentage of ethnic seniors is also growing.

In 1981, seniors (i.e., people aged 65 and over) comprised 9% of all Canadians. In 1986, they comprised 11%. By 2001, the proportion is expected to reach 14% and by 2021, it will have increased yet again to 20%.

A report produced by the Department of the Secretary of State early in 1988† offers several useful statistics, based for the most part on 1981 Census data, about ethnic seniors. For example,

- approximately 22% of seniors in Canada report an ethnic origin other than British or French
- approximately 17% of seniors were born outside Canada
- approximately 6,000 seniors immigrate to Canada each year
- approximately 24% of all those in Canada who speak neither English nor French are seniors
- among seniors, twice as many women as men speak neither English nor French.

**Genesis**

The idea of a national workshop to explore issues and concerns about aging which are unique to minority ethnic communities originated with the National Advisory Council on Aging. The Council suggested it to the Honourable George Hees, then newly appointed Minister of State (Seniors) Canada. Mr. Hees promoted the idea within Health and Welfare Canada which in turn raised it with the Multiculturalism Program in the Department of the Secretary of State.

Secretary of State at the time was in the process of developing the federal government's Multiculturalism Act. A key principle of this Act, which became law on July 21, 1988, is a government-wide responsibility to recognize multiculturalism in the development and implementation of all federal government policies and programs. Thus, there was strong support for this initiative to examine issues of importance to ethnic seniors at a National Workshop on Ethnicity and Aging.

†Copies of the report, **Aging in a Multicultural Canada: A Graphic Overview**, are available from the Multiculturalism Program, Department of the Secretary of State, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0M5.

## Sponsors

The Minister of State (Seniors) Canada, Health and Welfare Canada, the National Advisory Council on Aging, and the Department of the Secretary of State invited the Canadian Public Health Association and the Canadian Association on Gerontology to co-sponsor a workshop. Together, the six workshop sponsors sought the advice of Dr. Ralph Masi, founding president of a vital new association in the emerging field of multicultural health care, the Canadian Council on Multicultural Health. And so, with funding from the Health Promotion Contribution Program of Health and Welfare Canada, the National Workshop began to take shape.

## Objectives

The objectives of the National Workshop on Ethnicity and Aging were to:

1. Provide a forum for seniors from minority cultures to share their concerns with professionals and government officials, as well as each other.

2. Provide a means whereby professionals and government officials could increase their awareness and understanding of the needs and concerns of seniors from minority cultures.

3. Identify mechanisms by which issues of concern to seniors from minority cultures could be addressed.

## Participants

Approximately 115 people were invited to the National Workshop. They included nominees of national ethnocultural organizations, seniors' groups, national professional associations and service organizations for ethnic seniors, and researchers in the field of ethnicity and aging. Representatives from a number of government departments and agencies were also invited to participate. (Appendix B lists National Workshop Participants.)

In choosing their nominees, organizations were asked to give preference to people who were themselves seniors, who had done work on seniors' issues, and who would be willing to follow up on the workshop within their own organizations. More than half of those who attended were seniors.

## Workshop Structure and Process

There were two formal sessions at the National Workshop: the keynote address given by Dr. Milada Disman of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Toronto, and a panel discussion on "Closing the Gap" between what is today and what could be. The four

panelists were Betty Havens of the University of Manitoba, Jack Lee of the Canadian Public Health Association, Ralph Masi of the Canadian Council on Multicultural Health, and Victor Ujimoto of the University of Guelph.

The rest of the workshop took the form of working sessions. Participants from across Canada spent two-and-a-half days putting forward their own views, and listening to the views of others, on the subject of ethnicity and aging. The workshop structure, designed to support participants in their deliberations, included the use of facilitators and recorders, plus a series of work group reports and summary newsletters.

Delegates were divided into seven groups for a total of three working sessions. Given that aging is a life-long affair, the groups first considered factors that hinder positive aging. They then looked at factors that encourage positive aging, and finally, they looked at what the ideal future would be. Delegates were taken out of their groups only once, for an afternoon session on issues of particular concern.

**This Report**

National Workshop sponsors were asked by participants to produce and distribute a report on the National Workshop. Accordingly, this report is a summary of what, to National Workshop participants, are common views and concerns. Thirty-three informal recommendations are included in the final section.

**Follow-Up**

Even as the National Workshop was ending, follow-up had begun. One of the recommendations from the floor at the final plenary session was to establish a committee that would be responsible for following up on the recommendations described in this report. Regional groups met briefly to select individuals to sit with the Workshop Planning Committee on an ad hoc follow-up committee. (In Appendix B, an asterisk [*] appears next to the names of individuals on the ad hoc committee.)

# 2. A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

A country in which being a member of an ethnic group, or being a senior, is "an asset, not a handicap". . . "A paradise for all" as expressed by some workshop participants, that is the Canada for which National Workshop participants hope.

### Seniors and Ethnic Diversity

In the society of the future, seniors will be held in high esteem and cultural diversity will be valued. Regardless of ethnic origin, seniors will be respected as teachers, advisors, and guides to life. Those seniors who wish to maintain their cultural traditions will be able to do so. Those who wish to (or need to) will be able to receive services in their preferred language. In the future, all Canadians will be respectful of seniors and supportive of cultural diversity.

### A Contribution to Make

Seniors want to be active participants in society. In the future, their desire and ability to do so will be more clearly recognized. Seniors, including ethnic seniors, will have a say in the decisions that affect their lives. They will have the opportunity to participate in greater numbers in national, provincial and local advisory groups, and to be involved in planning and evaluating services to ensure they are culturally appropriate. Seniors will also participate in the delivery of these services. Moreover, their participation will be welcomed.

### Appropriate Services

In the ideal future, seniors will have access to a comprehensive range of well publicized resources and culturally appropriate services. Promotional and educational material will be available in many languages other than English and French. Services will be appropriate to the linguistic and cultural preferences of clientele of all ethnic origins and will be provided by professionals trained accordingly. The staff of mainstream institutions will reflect the cultural and linguistic composition of the community they serve. Professional qualifications earned abroad will receive fair recognition and the holders of those qualifications will be appreciated for their language and cross-cultural communication skills, as well as for their professional expertise. It follows that, in the future, there will be closer rapport between ethnic seniors and professionals.

### Personal Independence

Like all seniors, ethnic seniors hope for greater autonomy in the future. Retirement planning courses will be available to help people plan for a rewarding and financially secure old age. No one will lack the basic necessities and ethnic seniors, especially women, will have sufficient financial resources to meet their needs. Seniors will have a variety of housing options from which to chose, including ethno-specific apartment complexes and

institutions. When seniors can no longer travel to services on their own, transportation will be provided. Culturally appropriate in-home support services will help seniors maintain their independence. Also, to ensure that immigrant seniors from non-English, non-French-speaking countries can be independent immediately upon their arrival, they will have access to second-language courses and an orientation to life in Canada.

**A Challenge For All**

Respect for seniors, appreciation of cultural diversity, and openness to change: National Workshop participants identified these as the challenges which confront all Canadians. Optimism pervaded the workshop. Participants were confident their dreams can be realized and they returned home committed to working with other Canadians to improve the quality of life for seniors of all ethnic origins.

# 3. AGING WELL

Meeting in their work groups, participants in the National Workshop discussed what helps and what hinders the aging process. Sometimes, their comments were specific to the needs of ethnic seniors, sometimes they related to the elements essential to aging well, regardless of ethnic origin. Those that apply equally to all seniors are summarized at the outset of this section.

## 1. THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

To **age well** is a universal aspiration. National Workshop participants agreed that aging well has the same basic meaning regardless of a person's ethnicity. Similarly, regardless of ethnicity, the process of aging is helped by the presence of certain essential elements, or hindered by their absence.

Sound physical and mental health, financial security, comfortable housing and a supportive social environment are seen as the essential elements of aging well. As one's health and mobility decline, it also helps to have access to health and social services which maximize independence. Conversely, ill health, either physical or mental, a shortage of money, inappropriate housing, a lack of social support, and a lack of health and social services detract from aging well.

To age well, it is essential to feel **whole**. Also described as a sense of feeling part of something larger and more important than oneself, wholeness comes from being able to make a contribution, however small, to one's community and to society and from being appreciated for that contribution. As well, wholeness is the result of having mutually rewarding relationships with family, friends and members of one's peer group. When people of any age feel disconnected from society and useless, or when they lack supportive relationships, quality of life suffers. When seniors are in that situation, they may despair about life itself.

The feeling of having control over one's life, of being able to make important personal decisions, contributes to a sense of well-being. Among the most critical personal decisions seniors make are those about where to live and when to seek supportive or institutional housing. As long as they are able to make decisions about what matters in their lives, and as long as they are allowed to do so, quality of life is enhanced. When seniors are not allowed to make important personal decisions, either because someone usurps the right, or because there are no options, their sense of well-being is diminished and quality of life is adversely affected.

Individual differences also affect quality of life as people age. Some people have all they could ask for and are still unhappy. Others face adversity of all kinds and still enjoy life because they have the ability to adapt and the inner strength to survive. Nonetheless, it is easier to accept life's setbacks when support networks have been put in place by a society that cares about the quality of life people enjoy as they age.

## 2. ETHNIC SENIORS: A HETEROGENEOUS GROUP

National Workshop participants were alert to the dangers of generalizing about the characteristics of ethnic seniors; they are a heterogeneous group. Needs and preferences vary from ethnic group to ethnic group and from person to person within ethnic groups. Participants in the National Workshop made that point repeatedly.

Seniors who are recent immigrants to Canada are a case in point. They may speak the same language and hold the same, or similar, religious beliefs as others of the same ethnic origin. However, their needs and expectations may differ significantly, depending on their country of origin; reason for migration; age at which migration took place; and the period in history at which migration took place.

## 3. AGING WELL: THE ETHNICITY FACTOR

National Workshop participants identified four factors which relate specifically to the well-being of seniors of minority ethnocultural and racial groups. The factors are: their degree of accommodation; the size and interests of the ethnic group to which they belong; Canadian societal values; and the accessibility and appropriateness of services and information. The order in which these factors are discussed does not suggest their relative importance to participants.

### Degree of Accommodation

It is unrealistic to think that minority ethnic group members of any age can live in Canada without at least some adaptation to the majority culture. However, National Workshop participants were careful to point out the obligations of the majority culture to accommodate the cultures of minority ethnic groups. Referring specifically to ethnic seniors, participants noted that the concept of aging, and the role of seniors, vary from culture to culture. An understanding and acceptance of this manifestation of cultural diversity by members of the majority culture will enhance the quality of life for ethnic seniors.

Also, the quality of life an ethnic senior enjoys is determined, to some extent, by how much he or she feels at home in Canada. That, in turn, is likely to be affected by how long he or she has lived in this country. Ethnic seniors born in Canada and those who arrived as children are likely to experience fewer difficulties aging well than those who arrive in Canada as adults or as seniors. As seniors, their quality of life is likely to be better than people who immigrate to Canada in their adult or senior years.

Generally speaking, people who arrive as adults or seniors are less likely to develop a broad social support system, to know about the services available, and to feel

comfortable about using them. Some may never learn to speak English or French and thus be even more cut off from social support systems and services. It follows that, as seniors, their quality of life may be less enjoyable than other seniors of the same ethnic origin who were born in Canada or arrived as children.

**Ethnic Group Size and Interests**

The characteristics of the particular ethnic group to which seniors belong can have an impact on the quality of life they enjoy. The group's size, interests and ability to advocate are key factors. Some ethnic groups in Canada are small and their members widely dispersed. In such cases they probably meet infrequently to socialize and may have relatively little success putting forward the views of their communities, if indeed they try.

When a large number of people of the same ethnic origin live in the same general area, there may be sub-groups to reflect the diversity of social, political and religious preferences. Depending upon their interests and resources, these sub-groups may offer support services such as drop-in centres and meals-on-wheels to their older members. When they do, they are contributing significantly to the quality of life their senior members enjoy.

**Canadian Societal Values**

National Workshop participants acknowledged that, compared to a generation ago, Canada is more open to dialogue among members of different ethnic groups and more accommodating and appreciative of diverse cultural traditions and values. These changes notwithstanding, participants identified two aspects of Canadian life which make it difficult for ethnic seniors in general to age well.

There is not yet full recognition of Canada's ethnic and cultural diversity and Canadians are not yet fully aware of the extent of the contribution which minority ethnocultural and racial groups have made to this country's prosperity and cultural heritage. Moreover, Canadians do not always recognize that seniors from these groups are proud of this country and want to contribute to Canadian society. All seniors would enjoy life more if mainstream Canadians were more welcoming and more appreciative of their participation.

Also, like North Americans in general, Canadians are sometimes inclined to value youth more than old age. In contrast, a significant number of ethnic group members tend to value the wisdom and experience of seniors. Seniors from some groups can be particularly affected by this phenomenon. They may expect to be accorded special status and special treatment because of their age. Their younger relatives, on the other hand, may have adopted the North American view of old age; the result can be quite demoralizing for these seniors. Furthermore, middle-aged family members may find themselves caught between their parents whose attitude to aging is traditional and their children whose attitudes are more North American.

### Accessible, Appropriate Information and Services

Participants in the National Workshop identified two important ways in which service-providing institutions and organizations can help ethnic seniors age well. They are: the provision of more information in heritage languages as well as official languages and the provision of services appropriate to the needs of ethnic seniors.

Canada has many resources and services for seniors. Unfortunately, most advertising, promotional and educational materials are available only in one or both of the two official languages. Many ethnic seniors do not read, write or speak English or French and those who did may have lost this facility. (Seniors in later years may lose languages learned in adulthood.) In effect, their access to services may be curtailed and their quality of life may suffer.

Appropriate services are considered to be those provided by the same ethnic group, or provided by individuals of other ethnic backgrounds who take into account their clients' values, habitual practices, and personal preferences. As well, services are appropriate when they are provided in the recipient's language of preference. If that is not possible, then appropriateness may require the use of a competent professional interpreter.

Mainstream institutions and organizations, by their nature, provide services appropriate to the culture of the majority. It follows that their services may not be totally appropriate for minority ethnic group members. Fortunately, more and more institutions and organizations are introducing culturally appropriate services. This trend promises to improve the quality of services for everyone.

# 4. ISSUES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND STRATEGIES

To address the issues and challenges identified in their work groups, National Workshop participants made a variety of recommendations and suggested a variety of strategies for action. Authors of this report reviewed the recommendations and strategies that came from the seven work groups and, for the purpose of this report, grouped them by major issues.

Readers are asked to note carefully that the recommendations which follow did not go to a plenary session of participants for discussion, priority-setting or voting. Thus they do not have the status of formal recommendations from the National Workshop on Ethnicity and Aging. However, given the degree of unanimity from work group to work group, they can be considered as having the force of **informal recommendations** from the National Workshop.

Consolidation of the recommendations made by the work groups under nine major headings required that the authors of this report state the final recommendations in a more general way than some work groups had stated them. In such cases, recommendations for specific action made by individual work groups have been incorporated as **suggested strategies for action**.

In the issue groups, National Workshop participants discussed policies, programs and projects already in existence that specifically address or take account of the needs of ethnic seniors. The policies, programs and projects mentioned by the participants are itemized below, under the appropriate issue, as **examples of successful strategies**.

Most recommendations, or sets of recommendations, are preceded by a description of the issue which prompted the recommendations. However, in a few instances, work groups did not provide rationales for their recommendations.

### PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING AND ACCEPTANCE

Many ethnic seniors do not feel understood or fully accepted as an integral part of Canadian society and National Workshop participants identified this as a major issue. Ethnic seniors want the opportunity to participate fully as Canadians. At the same time, if they choose to, they want the freedom to maintain the cultural traditions that give meaning and structure to their lives. Like all seniors, many ethnic seniors see themselves as resources and long to be consulted for their wisdom and experience. They believe they have a special contribution to make in a multicultural society. In return, ethnic seniors want understanding and acceptance.

To create a society in Canada in which there is greater public understanding and acceptance of cultural diversity and of the special needs of ethnic seniors, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**1. Efforts be increased to educate and sensitize the public about the meaning of cultural diversity in a multicultural society, about issues faced by seniors in general, and about the unique issues faced by ethnic seniors.**

In addition to the need for education/sensitization programs for the public-at-large, National Workshop participants suggested programs targeted at groups of children, adults, seniors themselves, service-providers, educators, researchers, decision-makers, business people, and the media.

**Suggested Strategies For Action**

- Education/sensitization programs should focus on similarities, as well as differences, between mainstream society and ethnic groups. They should also focus on similarities and differences from ethnic group to ethnic group. Cultural variations and individual differences within ethnic groups should not be overlooked.

- Information on aging and multiculturalism should be included in the core curriculum of all educational institutions, from kindergarten through university.

- The popular non-print media (e.g., television, audio-visual shows) should be used to acquaint Canadians about how ethnic seniors experience immigration, re-settlement and adaptation. Such programs could also be a help to other seniors who are recent immigrants. As well, programs about ethnic seniors, or addressed to their special interests, might also be of interest to a large number of viewers among the general population.

- Community cooperative ventures should be encouraged which provide the opportunity for social interaction and generate income as well.

**Example of a Successful Strategy**

- In Saskatchewan, "I am a Canadian" is part of the education curriculum.

**WORKING TOGETHER**

As noted in other parts of this report, ethnic seniors want the opportunity to contribute more fully to society. They want to work with governments, community organizations, professionals and each other. They also want greater involvement in developing policies and making decisions that have an impact on seniors. So that they

can contribute effectively, ethnic seniors want to work with other ethnocultural groups. They especially want joint initiatives on matters relating to ethnicity and aging.

To increase the involvement of ethnic seniors in developing policies and making decisions that affect all of Canadian society, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**2. There be increased representation of ethnic seniors on national, provincial, and community planning, policy and program advisory boards.**

**Suggested Strategy For Action**

- Appointments to the National Advisory Council on Aging (NACA) should be based on criteria which include ethnic representation.

**Example of a Successful Strategy**

- Seniors are represented on program planning advisory councils in Prince Edward Island.

To increase the involvement of ethnic seniors at the service-providing level of institutions, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**3. Institutions and organizations increase their efforts to recruit ethnic seniors as volunteer service providers.**

Participants targeted this recommendation primarily at community organizations and health care institutions.

**Suggested Strategies For Action**

- Seniors from ethnocultural groups should be trained to serve as resource people for their own communities.
- Staff should be hired to train volunteers and coordinate their activities.
- Volunteers should be recognized for the work they do. For example, they should be re-imbursed for out-of-pocket expenses. They could also be given special citations.
- Volunteers' views should be sought in program evaluation.

**Example of a Successful Strategy**

- In London, Ontario, volunteers have recovered out-of-pocket expenses under the provisions of a program of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services.

So that networks of people working to meet the needs of ethnic seniors and coalitions of ethnic seniors' groups can develop, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**4. A strategy be developed to ensure on-going interaction among people and institutions involved in work pertaining to the quality of life of ethnic seniors.**

**Suggested Strategies For Action**

- The embryo network initiated at the National Workshop should be encouraged and strengthened by the sponsor organizations.
- NACA should be responsible for the dissemination of relevant information to interested groups and should continue the networking process begun at the National Workshop.
- The sponsor organizations should continue on a regular basis their joint efforts to develop further initiatives to serve seniors of all ethnic groups.

**Example of a Successful Strategy**

- The Multicultural Health Coalition in Ontario is an example of a network of resource persons.

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Access to information is an equality rights issue for ethnic seniors and National Workshop participants identified three distinct dimensions of the issue. They are: barriers to resources and services because of language difficulties; the lack of information on ethnicity and aging; and the distribution of information and material on resources and services that are available.

Participants in the National Workshop were concerned that many ethnic seniors are not fluent in either of Canada's two official languages. For all practical purposes these seniors are denied access to information printed, or provided orally, only in English or French.

Ethnicity and aging, as a distinct field of study, is relatively new. National Workshop participants identified this as an information issue to be addressed.

The distribution of information was also identified as a problem. Ethnic seniors and ethnic seniors' groups want access to the information that is currently available on aging and on resources and services for seniors. Finally, as noted in Recommendation 4, they want to be part of a network which includes professionals and lay people interested in researching and providing resources and services for ethnic seniors.

To ensure that ethnic seniors and ethnic seniors' groups have access to information about resources, programs and services available to them, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**5. Each provincial government designate a centralized agency to collect and disseminate, in official and heritage languages, information about resources, programs and services for seniors.**

**Suggested Strategies For Action**

- Toll-free lines should be established so that seniors have easy access to the provincial agency.

- Each provincial agency should publicize information in a variety of ways. Suggestions included: coloured pages in the phone book, in large print, and in the appropriate languages; ads in the electronic and print media, the ethnic media included; inserts in utility bills, pension cheques and other government mailings.

- Directories of seniors' groups and directories of services for seniors provided by governments and the private sector should be published in many languages, distributed to seniors and updated regularly.

**Examples of Successful Strategies**

- In Alberta, all information pertaining to seniors is in the white pages of the telephone directory under "s". As well, in that province a provincial government publication lists all services for seniors.

- The Seniors' Advisory Bureau in Peterborough, Ontario provides information and assistance for a variety of services.

To supplement the existing knowledge base on ethnicity and aging, to gather information on resources and programs for ethnic seniors, and to disseminate the information gathered, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**6. The federal government establish a national resource centre on ethnicity and aging.**

**Suggested Strategies For Action**

- The national resource centre should be a documentation centre where a broad range of information on ethnicity and aging, on resources for ethnic seniors, and on innovative successful programs is collected. The information should be disseminated to people at all levels of government, to professionals, ethnic seniors' groups, and to the general public.

- The national resource centre should conduct, or commission, research on the subject of ethnicity and aging and the circumstances of ethnic seniors. The needs and concerns of ethnic communities should be taken into consideration in deciding what aspects of ethnicity and aging to research and, as a matter of

course, the research results should be returned to the ethnic community that has been studied. Research on recreational programs that are culturally appropriate is a project the centre should consider seriously.

To ensure that ethnic seniors are adequately informed about important aspects of health care (e.g., nutrition, medication), National Workshop participants recommended that:

**7. Health care institutions provide clearly understandable health promotion information in appropriate heritage languages as well as English and French.**

**Example of a Successful Strategy**

- The Multicultural Health Coalition in Ontario has developed health information materials and resources in a variety of languages.

**8. The federal government ensure that health promotion and other programs that would benefit ethnic seniors be broadcast by the electronic media.**

Participants suggested the CRTC as an agency which could be involved in the implementation of this recommendation.

**ACCESS TO SERVICES**

Participants in the National Workshop saw ethnic seniors as particularly vulnerable when they want, or need, services. Most services are attuned to the needs and preferences of the general population and provided in English or French. As a result, they are not always appropriate to the needs and preferences of ethnic seniors.

Many seniors have never learned to speak English or French. Even those who have, may revert to their mother-tongue language as a result of the aging process. Nonetheless, most mainstream services are routinely delivered in English or French.

Many ethnic seniors want to maintain, or reclaim, their cultural traditions and live in a manner consistent with those traditions. Mainstream services, however, are designed with the culture of the general population as the norm. As a result, they are not always appropriate for ethnic seniors whose habits, expectations and preferences may differ significantly from the habits, expectations and preferences of the general population. Technically, mainstream services may be excellent. Culturally, they may be somewhat inappropriate for ethnic seniors.

According to participants in the National Workshop, mainstream health care services, social services, recreation services and housing services (including long-term care institutions) could be more culturally appropriate for ethnic seniors. Culturally and

linguistically appropriate mental health services for seniors were singled out as a particular and urgent issue. The need for them is discussed below.

To ensure that ethnic seniors have full access to mainstream services, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**9. Mainstream institutions and organizations review their services to determine the extent to which they meet the linguistic and culturally determined needs of ethnic seniors.**

The institutions named specifically by participants as the target of this recommendation included hospitals, home care health and social services (e.g., visiting nurses and homemakers) and pharmaceutical companies. They also mentioned libraries.

To ensure that professionals are sensitive to the psychological, social and cultural needs of ethnic seniors, as well as their physical needs, participants in the National Workshop recommended that:

**10. Institutions increase their efforts to recruit culturally sensitive professional staff and ensure their recruitment programs target ethnocultural communities being served.**

Health and social service institutions were the particular target of this recommendation.

**Examples of Successful Strategies**

- The Vancouver Public Health Department has a multicultural hiring policy and it runs a wellness program for seniors.
- The Toronto Public Health Department has hired multicultural workers and provides translated materials.

**11. Professional schools and mainstream institutions incorporate courses in both cultural awareness and gerontology into their core curricula and on-going in-service training.**

**Examples of Successful Strategies**

- Memorial University of Newfoundland offers a course in transcultural nursing.
- Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C. has introduced a course in ethnicity and aging.

Professional schools intended as targets of this recommendation included schools of medicine, nursing, social work, physiotherapy, and the like. Institutions intended as targets included hospitals, public health departments, social service agencies and other institutions from which ethnic seniors receive health care.

To meet the special needs of ethnic seniors, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**12. Governments encourage the development and maintenance of culturally appropriate services and programs for ethnic seniors.**

**Examples of Successful Strategies**

- In Ottawa, Ontario, there is a day centre for Chinese elders. Seniors are helped to stay in their homes as long as possible. Programs include health screening; educational counselling; a "health diary"; recreation; tai chi; arts and crafts; referrals and escorted outings. The program uses many volunteers. Members pay $1 per month. Funders include the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services and New Horizons.

- In Montreal, Quebec, 60 Italian seniors' clubs, with a total of 2,000 members, have affiliated under an umbrella organization. Services provided include help with completing forms; meals-on-wheels; home support; volunteer visiting; educational radio and television programs; and a newsletter. Members of other ethnic groups are invited to social events.

- The Chinese Interpretation Information Services (CIIS) in Toronto, Ontario, provides interpretation for Chinese Canadians. It publicizes its services through pamphlets and posters in shops. CIIS is funded by the United Way.

- In Victoria, British Columbia, several services are offered from one "umbrella" centre. They include a seniors' skills exchange; a stroke club; a widow's group; and peer counselling. (However, these programs are not, as yet, promoted among ethnic groups.)

- Toronto, Ontario, has community drop-in centres funded by the municipalities and donations from prominent businessmen. There is a nominal membership fee.

## SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS

Three sub-groups among the population of ethnic seniors were identified by participants in the National Workshop as having special needs. They are: immigrant seniors, specifically those who come to Canada in their senior years as sponsored dependents; ethnic seniors whose mental health is problematic; and those who need long-term institutional care. More discussion appears to have taken place on the special needs of immigrant seniors than on the needs of the other two groups. However, this should not be construed as an indication of relative need. It could equally well indicate that group members assumed the need to be self-evident.

### Immigrant Seniors

Immigration is a stressful experience regardless of a person's age. Participants in the National Workshop were concerned about the needs of seniors who come to Canada as

sponsored dependents, often the parents of recent immigrants who themselves are not yet securely established. As sponsored dependents, immigrant seniors who do not speak English or French are not eligible for second language courses subsidized by the Canadian government. The result is that immigrant seniors may never learn to speak either of the official languages and may never fully adapt to Canada. Moreover, if they do not meet other people who speak their language, isolation can become a serious problem. As well, they may not know about orientation programs in the community available for all newcomers.

Some immigrant seniors encounter financial hardship. During an up-to-ten year period, sponsors are financially responsible for their dependents. Sponsorship sometimes becomes a great burden for families. If family circumstances change, or the sponsorship threatens to break down, immigrant seniors can find themselves in extremely problematic situations.

Also, the majority have only small pensions from their homelands, or none at all. In any case, no immigrant senior can collect a Canadian government old age pension for ten years after becoming a landed immigrant. As a result, they may be unhappy in Canada, unable to return home, ineligible for financial assistance, unable to speak English or French, and ashamed to ask friends or ethnocultural associations for help.

Since seniors who immigrate to Canada as sponsored dependents under the family reunification program may have unique adaptation problems and may encounter problems resulting from the up-to-ten-year sponsorship requirement, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**13. The federal government review its policies related to: the provision of settlement and adaptation programs for sponsored senior immigrants; the provision of second language classes for seniors; and seniors' eligibility for social security benefits.**

**Suggested Strategies For Action**

- Settlement and adaptation programs should be available to all seniors who immigrate to Canada. English or French-as-a-second-language classes should be available to senior immigrants who speak neither of the two official languages.

- The ten-year sponsor/dependency condition in the family reunification program should be made more flexible to take into account unforeseen emergencies resulting from changes in family circumstances.

**14. The Settlement Language Training Program (SLTP) be made more flexible in terms of the length of time for which it is provided; and SLTP classes be made more specific to the particular needs of students.**

### Mental Health Services

To ensure the best possible mental health services for ethnic seniors, National Workshop participants recommended that:

15. **The work of the Task Force on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees be commended and those responsible be urged to give particular attention to the situation of seniors.**

16. **The concerns and needs of ethnic seniors be given priority in mental health studies for which government funding is provided.**

17. **Funding for culturally appropriate services in the area of mental health for seniors be declared a priority.**

### Ethnic Seniors With Long-Term Care Needs

To ensure that ethnic seniors who are no longer autonomous receive culturally appropriate care, National Workshop participants recommended that:

18. **Non-profit nursing homes for ethnic seniors and homes for the frail elderly be established; and mortgage subsidies be offered to their developers.**

## NATIONAL POLICY ON AGING

National Workshop participants recommended that:

19. **A national policy on aging be developed which: includes a clear definition of responsible jurisdictions; outlines a plan for federal programs and services; reflects the multicultural/multiracial reality of Canada; and has sufficient resources for implementation.**

## INDEPENDENCE ISSUES COMMON TO ALL SENIORS

Just as National Workshop participants discussed aspects of aging common across all ethnic groups, they also made recommendations for changes that would affect all seniors, regardless of their ethnic origins. Independence, expressed in terms of financial and physical security and home support services, surfaced as a major issue at the workshop. Issues unique to female seniors were also discussed. However, the work groups did not make any recommendations specific to them.

To allow seniors to live independently in their own homes as long as possible, National Workshop participants recommended that:

20. **In-home support and neighbourhood-based services be expanded; and that local councils on aging coordinate services to seniors.**

Services mentioned as desirable included: support for seniors who live in their own homes (e.g., house care) or who need help with meals (e.g., meals on wheels); support for

families who care for seniors (e.g., day care centres, respite care); and one-stop resource centres. The need for professionals who work in institutions to be connected with community organizations and resources was also mentioned.

**21. A variety of safety and security programs be established by municipalities for seniors' homes and neighbourhoods; and that national voluntary and governmental organizations work together to collect and distribute information about innovative and successful safety and security programs.**

**Suggested Strategy For Action**

- The Seniors' Secretariat and NACA should be involved in collecting and distributing information about innovative and successful safety and security programs.

**Example of a Successful Strategy**

- The Senior Citizens Council of Ottawa-Carleton runs a letter carriers' alert program for seniors and the handicapped.

**22. Home maintenance subsidies be provided.**

**23. In areas where it does not exist, a property tax credit be established for qualifying seniors; and that where it does exist, the ceiling on this credit be raised.**

To ensure the financial security of seniors, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**24. The federal government lower the age at which people become eligible for old age security benefits.**

**25. Governments ensure complete indexation of both public and private pensions and of income supplement payments.**

**26. The federal government increase survivor benefits to widows.**

**27. A variety of job options such as flexible retirement, job-sharing and part-time employment be made available to seniors.**

**NATIONAL WORKSHOP FOLLOW-UP**

National Workshop participants recognized the urgency of addressing issues of ethnicity and aging, and of doing so on many fronts. In their workshop evaluations, participants indicated that they found the work group discussions stimulating and the

presentations thought-provoking. They appreciated having been asked to attend the workshop and were pleased to see the diverse ethnic and professional backgrounds of those who attended.

To ensure that the ideas and enthusiasm generated at the National Workshop are not lost, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**28. Individual participants give a report on the workshop to the organization(s) which they represented or with which they are affiliated.**

**29. An ad hoc committee of participants be formed to develop mechanisms to ensure follow-up on the recommendations made by the work groups.**

**30. The sponsor organizations develop and implement a plan to follow up systematically on the workshop.**

**Suggested Strategies For Action**

- The Workshop Planning Committee should prepare a report on the workshop. It should include the recommendations from all the work groups.
- The report of the workshop should be distributed widely. In addition to participants, recipients of the report should include people at all levels of government as well as non-government organizations with mandates relevant to the issues identified by the participants.
- In a year, the sponsor organizations should conduct a review of the recommendations made by the National Workshop participants to determine what has been achieved.

**OTHER**

To ensure the financial security of ethnic seniors, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**31. Tax deductions, up to a set maximum, be reinstated for financial assistance to dependent parents (or equivalent) living outside Canada.**

**32. Seniors who return to their country of origin continue to receive old age security and benefits.**

To ensure that community groups are adequately funded to continue the programs they start, National Workshop participants recommended that:

**33. Government funding for programs delivered by community groups have clearly specified time frames; and when funding is initially approved for a program, funders take into account the difficulty of obtaining on-going core funding from other sources.**

# 5. EXCERPTS FROM KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND PANEL DISCUSSION

## Ethnicity and Aging: The Canadian Experience a summary of the Keynote Address given by Dr. Milada Disman

Dr. Milada Disman is an associate professor in the Department of Behavioral Science, Faculty of Medicine, at the University of Toronto. Her research, teachings and publishing are in the area of aging, ethnicity and mental health.

In her address to the National Workshop participants, Dr. Disman noted that the National Workshop marked the first time that representatives of minority ethnocultural groups have taken part in a large-scale discussion on "Ethnicity and Aging". In her presentation, she undertook to provide a road map that indicates where we are now, the destination being consensus on issues and a plan of action for dealing with them.

Drawing from the work of a number of researchers, she noted the position of many ethnic seniors as one of double jeopardy ("old" and "ethnic") or even triple jeopardy ("old" and "ethnic" and "female"). Research suggests that the most vulnerable are those people who immigrated when they were already of retirement age, sponsored by their adult children.

For these seniors in particular, a key issue is access, especially access to health care programs. "No vision of health in a multicultural society can be realized without attention to cultural diversity." Suggesting that many of today's social programs tend to be "culture-blind", she encouraged greater attention from policy-makers to the needs of minority communities.

She also encouraged further research on multicultural concerns relating to aging because much of the existing research about aging in Canada presumes that "Anglo values are generally applicable to the elderly", and that is not actually so.

"Canadian research on ethnicity and aging is in its infancy", she said. "We need a good deal of research so that we can build a data base which can be translated into services and programs."

She suggested five factors in particular that should be remembered in planning, implementation and day-to-day operation of programs and services for the ethnic elderly:

- an unfamiliarity on the part of many ethnic seniors with cultures other than their own
- an unfamiliarity with the cultures of ethnic seniors to whom programs are directed on the part of many service providers

- often, a lack of knowledge among ethnic seniors of available services
- often, the preference of ethnic seniors for maintenance of their own cultures
- an appreciation that the most effective services (for ethnic seniors) are often those with leadership from ethnic communities

She recommended public education programs to help Canadians learn more about the seniors from minority communities among them.

Dr. Disman also touched on the use of the term "ethnic", which in popular speech has sometimes been used to mean foreign, alien, and therefore inferior. "I would like to propose an alternative understanding of ethnicity. I view ethnicity as part of our personal history. This permits us to perceive diversity . . . as being based on uniqueness of personal histories."

## "Closing the Gap"
## A Panel Discussion on Access to Services

Four workshop participants took part in a panel discussion about access to services for seniors from minority ethnocultural groups.

Betty Havens, an assistant professor of social and preventive medicine at the University of Manitoba and Manitoba Provincial Gerontologist, stressed the importance of ethnic seniors having a say in the design of programs to meet their needs.

Jack Lee, chairman of the Canadian Public Health Association's Gerontology Division, made the point that many public services are not used by members of minority ethnocultural groups, especially seniors.

He suggested that it is very important for seniors to voice their concerns about access issues, because "the Canadian system is a very political one, and a political system is very sensitive to advocacy."

Ralph Masi, a practicing physician and president of the Canadian Council on Multicultural Health, proposed greater attention by federal and provincial health departments to the needs of minority ethnocultural communities, especially the need for information.

Victor Ujimoto, an associate professor and research associate at the University of Guelph's Gerontology Research Centre, gave practical examples of how easily ethnocultural groups can misunderstand one another. He cautioned against assuming that ethnic seniors are immigrant seniors.

The panel discussion chairperson was Shirley Serafini, Assistant Under Secretary of State, Multiculturalism, for the Department of the Secretary of State.

# APPENDIX A
# NATIONAL WORKSHOP SPONSORS, PLANNING COMMITTEE AND FACILITATION TEAM

## SPONSORS

### The Minister of State (Seniors) Canada

The first Minister of State (Seniors) Canada was appointed in August 1987, and is responsible for representing seniors' views in Cabinet. The Minister believes seniors are the ones best able to define the Minister's role and therefore is consulting extensively with seniors and seniors' groups for recommendations and advice.

* * *

### Seniors Secretariat, Health and Welfare Canada

The Seniors Secretariat was established in October 1987 within the Department of National Health and Welfare to provide support to the Minister of State for Seniors. The Seniors Secretariat is responsible for liaising with federal government departments and agencies to co-ordinate initiatives that impact on seniors, consulting with seniors' organizations, professional and volunteer associations, governments at all levels and individual seniors, and providing a communications and information service.

* * *

### Canadian Public Health Association

The Canadian Public Health Association, established in 1912, is a national, voluntary organization dedicated to the promotion and maintenance of the health of Canadians. With a membership of over 2,500 health professionals, CPHA serves as the national voice for public health in Canada. Membership is open to anyone interested in public health.

* * *

### The Department of the Secretary of State

The Multiculturalism Sector of the federal Department of the Secretary of State has a mandate to promote and foster multiculturalism in Canada. It has three funding programs, the Race Relations and Cross-Cultural Understanding Program, the Heritage Cultures and Languages Program, and the Community Support and Participation Program, plus a Multiculturalism Secretariat to encourage and monitor the cross-governmental commitment to multiculturalism.

* * *

National Advisory Council on Aging

The National Advisory Council on Aging was established on May 1, 1980 by Federal Order-in-Council. With 18 members from all parts of Canada, the Council has a balance of experienced citizens from various walks of life, all dedicated to the best interests of Canada's aging population. The activities of the Council are managed by a Secretariat in Ottawa.

* * *

Canadian Association on Gerontology

The Canadian Association on Gerontology (CAG) is a national multi-disciplinary scientific and educational association established to give leadership in matters related to issues of aging. CAG was founded October 15, 1971 and incorporated on April 13, 1973.

* * *

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# APPENDIX C
# NATIONAL WORKSHOP PROGRAM

## SUNDAY 21 FEBRUARY

6:00-8:00 pm **RECEPTION**

Greetings:
The Honourable George Hees
Minister of State for Seniors

## MONDAY 22 FEBRUARY

Theme: **Cultural Views on Aging — What It's Like to Be a Senior Today**

9:00 **PLENARY SESSION**
Chair: Franklin M.M. White
President, Canadian Public Health Association

**Greetings:**
Margery Boyce
Workshop Planning Committee

**Keynote Address:**
**Ethnicity and Aging — The Canadian Experience**
Milada Disman, University of Toronto

10:00 Nutrition and Stretch Break

10:30 **WORKSHOPS**

12:00 **LUNCHEON**
Chair: Franklin M.M. White

Introduction of Guest Speaker:
Kappu Desai
National Advisory Council on Aging

Guest Speaker:
Geoff Scott, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Honorable David Crombie, Secretary of State and Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism

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| 2:00 | **WORKSHOPS** |
| 3:00 | Nutrition and Stretch Break |
| 3:30-5:00 | **ISSUE GROUPS: SHARING IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES** |

## TUESDAY 23 FEBRUARY

Theme: **Cultural Views on Aging — What It Could Be Like to Be a Senior**

9:00 **PLENARY SESSION**
Chair: Darlene Flett
Canadian Association on Gerontology

**Panel — Closing the Gap**
Moderator:
Shirley Serafini
Assistant Under-Secretary of State, Multiculturalism
Department of the Secretary of State
Panelists:
Ralph Masi, Canadian Council on Multicultural Health
Victor Ujimoto, University of Guelph
Betty Havens, University of Manitoba
Jack Lee, Canadian Public Health Association

**Workshop Report**
Gail Siler-Wells, Facilitation Coordinator

10:30 Nutrition and Stretch Break
Visit the Displays

11:00 **WORKSHOPS**

12:00 **BUFFET LUNCH AND DISPLAYS**

2:00 **WORKSHOPS**
(continued)

3:00 Nutrition Break
Visit the Displays

3:30-5:00 **WORKSHOPS**
(continued)

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| 7:00-9:30 pm | **RECEPTION AND DINNER**<br>Chair: Louise Plouffe<br>Canadian Association on Gerontology<br><br>Introduction of Guest Speaker:<br>Peter Glynn<br>Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Services and Promotion Branch<br>Health and Welfare Canada<br><br>Guest Speaker:<br>Monique B. Tardif, MP<br>Parliamentary Secretary to the<br>Minister of National Health and Welfare |

## WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY

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| Theme: | **Cultural Views on Aging — What Should We Do Next?** |
| 9:00 | **WORKSHOPS** |
| 10:00 | Nutrition and Stretch Break |
| 10:30 | **PLENARY**<br>Chair: Charlotte Matthews<br>President, National Advisory Council on Aging<br><br>**Workshop Reports by Individual Workshop Groups** |
| 11:30 | **Summary**<br>Gail Siler-Wells |
| 12:00-12:30 | **Closing Remarks**<br>The Honourable Jake Epp<br>Minister of National Health and Welfare |
| 2:00 | **Tour of the Parliament Buildings** |